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# VISUALLY-BASED KNOWINGLY ILLUSORY PRESENCE AND PICTURE DISPLAY

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## abstract

*The aim of this paper is twofold. First, I want to show how picture perception is specifically presentational, hence specifically perceptual, by suitably reinterpreting Richard Wollheim's conception of seeing-in. Picture perception is such for it only ascribes the presence of the picture's subject in its content, but not in its mode, for the subject is visually known not to be there: thus, it amounts to a knowingly illusory perceptual experience of such a presence. Second, I want to show how this presentational specificity does not prevent the picture itself from being properly presentational of the properties that are ascribed, within its perception, to its subject: the design properties of the picture's vehicle present the perceivable properties ascribed to the picture's subject just as the sensory features of a standard perceptual experience present the perceivable properties of its object.*

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## keywords

*pictorial perception, seeing-in, presentational character, knowingly illusory presence*

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is twofold. First, I want to show how picture perception is specifically presentational, hence specifically perceptual, by suitably reinterpreting Richard Wollheim's conception of seeing-in. Picture perception is such for it only ascribes the presence of the picture's subject in its content, but not in its mode, for the subject is visually known not to be there: thus, it amounts to a knowingly illusory perceptual experience of such a presence. Second, I want to show how this presentational specificity does not prevent the picture itself from being properly presentational of the properties that are ascribed, within its perception, to its subject: the design properties of the picture's vehicle present the perceivable properties ascribed to the picture's subject just as the sensory features of a standard perceptual experience present the perceivable properties of its object. As a consequence, the fact that the picture's vehicle displays the picture's subject allows for a derivative way for pictorial perception to be properly presentational.

## 2. Pictorial perception as a *sui generis* perception that is specifically presentational

In several occasions (1980<sup>2</sup>, 1987, 1998, 2003a), Richard Wollheim has claimed that pictorial perception is a *sui generis* form of perception, *seeing-in*. For Wollheim, this means that pictorial perception is a *twofold* perceptual experience whose folds, the *configurational* and the *recognitional*, respectively grasp the picture's *vehicle* (the physical basis of the picture) and the picture's *subject* (what is seen in the picture, or in other and less technical terms, what the picture displays). Those folds are however intrinsically connected, so that they do not correspond to the respective perceptions of the vehicle and of the subject given in isolation. Unfortunately, Wollheim did not explicitly say *how* seeing-in amounts to a *perceptual* experience, even a *sui generis* one. Yet an alternative but compatible way of capturing the proprietary character of pictorial perception as seeing-in consists in reflecting on its specific way to be a *presentational* experience. According to Crane and French (2015), the phenomenal character of our standard perceptual experiences gives their objects and the properties ascribed to them as *present*, i.e., as being *out there*, in a way that is responsive of such a presentness (unlike imagination, one cannot modify at will what one perceives). This immediately means that, unlike any standard perceptual experience, seeing-in is not *properly* presentational. For in its *overall* phenomenal character, hence in its *mode*, i.e., the factor that settles what kind of state a mental state is (Crane 2001), the picture's subject and the properties that are ascribed to it in its recognitional fold are *not* given to us as present. Indeed, as many people have underlined (Matthen, 2005; Dokic, 2012; Voltolini, 2015; Ferretti 2018), *qua* pictorial perception, seeing-in involves no feeling of presence with respect to that subject.

Yet it remains a *perceptual* experience. For, unlike imagination (or thought), its subject is *present as absent* (Noë, 2012, 2015). How can one cash out this idea in detail?

Here Husserl (2006) enters the stage. For Husserl, a picture involves three layers: the picture's *carrier* – again, the physical basis of a picture – the *image-object* of the picture – again, what the picture displays<sup>1</sup> – and the picture's *referent*, what the picture is about (Wiesing, 2010).

Basically, Husserl's first two layers respectively correspond to Wollheim's picture's vehicle and picture's subject, once one tells that subject from the picture's referent. This distinction actually does not occur in Wollheim, but it is compatible with what he says, provided that one takes what is seen in the picture as a *generic* subject that remains the same across the different referents the picture has, or may have (Voltolini, 2015). For example, in seeing *La Gioconda*, one merely sees a charming woman on the background of an Italian landscape. Yet *La Gioconda* is allegedly the portrait of Lisa Gherardini, wife of Francesco del Giocondo, as Giorgio Vasari himself testifies. Yet, without any change in what one sees in it, it might as well be the portrait of Caterina Sforza, or of Isabella of Aragon, or even a selfportrait of Leonardo, as some other people claim. Once things are put this way, one may say that the picture's carrier and the image-object are experientially captured by the two folds Wollheim postulates for seeing-in, the configurational and the recognitional fold respectively. It is disputable whether the third Husserlian pictorial layer, the picture's referent, involves, in the overall pictorial experience, a further perception-like fold (a move that some Husserlians – Brough, 2012; Kurg, 2014; Nanay, 2016, 2018 – endorse; for some reasons against it, see Voltolini, 2018), but I will remain here neutral about that. For what counts here is that, by appealing to the role of the image-object, the Husserlian account tries to explain how pictorial perception is specifically presentational. However, I think that such an account, in its possible variants, does not manage to provide a successful explanation of how that perception is specifically presentational. Hence, it does not explain the proprietary perceptual character of picture perception. Let me expand on this.

First, a proponent of threefoldness may endorse Wiesing's (2010) account, according to which the image-object is *artificially* present. To be sure, here "artificially" cannot be meant literally. Clearly enough, a painter intends its audience to see something in the picture, yet that intention is not successful unless one really so sees that very something (Hopkins, 1998). Yet the capacity of seeing things in other things is a natural, not an artefactual, capacity (Wollheim, 1980<sup>2</sup>, 1987). In other words, the capacity that allows one to see a woman in *La Gioconda* is the very same capacity that allows one to see a face in a rock, which is to say, to have what Cutting and Massironi (1998) called a *fortuitous image*.<sup>2</sup> Yet if "artificially" is not meant literally, it is hard to see what it may mean. One might, with Eldridge (2018), retort that artificial presence amounts to a *fictional* presence in which it is *as if* something were out there. But a fictional presence is hardly perceived. At most, if it were an imagined presence (which Eldridge denies, for fictional presence is not the outcome of a mere presentifying experience of imagination), it would be quasi-perceived.

Second, a proponent of threefoldness may appeal to Aasen's (2015, 2016) idea that what is seen in a picture is a universal. To be sure, this idea sounds problematic. Independently of the general problem of how one can perceive universals, a specific problem arises as to how we can perceive *the* universal that pictorial perception allegedly mobilizes, which is *not* what the picture's vehicle instantiates. Suppose that one faces the picture of an apple. In that case, the universal that one allegedly sees in the picture is *appleness*. Yet appleness is not instantiated by

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1 As Wiesing himself (2010) stresses.

2 Wiesing himself (personal communication) agrees that here "artificial" does not convey the idea of being purposively produced.

that picture's vehicle: no part of it is an apple. In the vehicle, universals of colours and shapes are instantiated, insofar as it contains, say, a red round spot. Yet even if this problem could be solved, it is unclear how seeing a universal in a picture might account for the presentational character of that experience. Whatever one's conception of universals, out-there-ness is not attributed to such a universal. If one has a Platonic conception, universals are not out there, but are *beyond* out-there-ness. If one has an Aristotelian conception, there certainly are universals that are instantiated out there but, as we have just seen, they are not the relevant universals: when we have a pictorial perception of an apple, *appleness* is not even instantiated out there. Thus, a universal cannot be present in the relevant perceptual sense.

Third, a proponent of threefoldness may appeal to Briscoe's (2016) claim that the perception of the vehicle merely *causes* not only the imagining of the image-object (a *virtual* object, as Briscoe takes it), but also a perceptual experience of it. Granted, if this were the case, one might account for the presentational character of pictorial perception. For pictorial experience would amount to a sort of hallucination-like experience, that is, a hallucination that is prompted by the perception of the picture's vehicle.<sup>3</sup> Definitely, hallucinations are standard perceptual experiences, to be taken on a par, *qua* such experiences, with genuine perceptions, whether veridical or not (illusions).<sup>4</sup> Yet one would then be implausibly forced to allow for *hallucinatory pictures*, that is, to take as *pictorial* perceptions cases in which, by looking at a thing, one hallucinates something else.<sup>5</sup> For example, by looking at a canvas, one may hallucinate an apple; yet it does not seem that the canvas becomes a picture of an apple, or at least acquires that figurative value, in virtue of such a hallucination. As a matter of fact, Briscoe thinks that his view does not allow for hallucinatory pictures. For, he says, "a surface *S* is a picture only if looking at it causes the experience of virtual depth and 3D structure in the right way", that is, by being "systematically guided by sources of optical information in the light reflected (or emitted) by *S* to the eye" (2016, p. 63). Yet even adding this constraint does not seem to provide a sufficient condition for something to be a picture. For – as Goodman (1968) originally suggested – a twin of a certain individual *X* may cause the experience of virtual depth and 3D structure in the right way and still it is not a picture of *X*.

Fourth, according to Nanay (2016), who is an explicit defender of threefoldness, 'aspect dawning' pictures show that the experience of an item that is intermediate between the picture's vehicle and the picture's referent, namely, what Husserl called the image-object, is perceptual. After all, consider the experiential shift that occurs when one grasps the figurative value of such a picture. In that shift, one suddenly sees a subject (say, a Dalmatian dog) in what originally seemed to be a mere blob of 2D forms and colours (say, black and white spots). Now, says Nanay, that shift is best accommodated by saying that it amounts to coming to perceive the intermediate item. For in that switch, the perceptual experience of the picture's vehicle changes (in the Dalmatian case, we come to see some illusory contours in the vehicle's surface). Yet to begin with, how can the intermediate item in question be encoded in a *perceptual* sense? Nanay's account does not explain how and why the intermediate item is perceived. For it is not the case that the perceptual change in the apprehension of the vehicle depends on the sudden perception of that item, as Nanay holds. Instead, it is the other way round (Voltolini, 2013, 2015): the fact that the perception of the vehicle suitably changes, in

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3 Briscoe seems to accept this characterization of his point of view when, by following Gombrich (1972, p. 208), he says that picture perception is akin to a visual hallucination (2017).

4 This is something even a disjunctivist on perceptual experiences, i.e., someone maintaining that genuine perceptions and hallucinations belong to different fundamental kinds of mental states, may agree on. Simply, for a disjunctivist *being a perceptual experience* does not amount to a fundamental kind of mental state.

5 For this notion, see Casati (2010).

virtue of appropriately grouping the elements of such a vehicle, allows for something else, the intermediate item, to be discerned in it.<sup>6</sup> Moreover and more importantly for our present purposes, if the intermediate item is visually encoded as Nanay wishes, out-there-ness is even more scarcely ascribed to it. So again, the presentational character of picture perception remains unexplained.

At this point, it is better to come back to Wollheim's seeing-in account of pictorial perception, by trying to see whether it may be reinterpreted in such a way as to account for the specific presentational character of such a perception. Here comes my new proposal: the picture's subject, as given in the recognitional fold of pictorial perception *qua* seeing-in, is (for visual reasons) *knowingly illusorily present*.

To begin with, as we have already seen before, the way in which the picture's subject is present in pictorial perception cannot affect the phenomenal character, hence the *mode*, of that perception. For the subject is not felt as present. Yet it affects the *content* of pictorial perception, in particular the content of its recognitional fold. Indeed in that fold, the subject is represented as present, or, which is the same, the subject is ascribed out-there-ness.<sup>7</sup> Actually, the fact that out-there-ness lies in the content of an experience is a necessary condition for its being a properly presentational experience. Nevertheless, it is not a sufficient one; this is why pictorial perception is a *sui generis* form of a presentational experience, hence of a perceptual experience as well.

However, the fact that the subject's presence affects just the content of pictorial perception transpires in the mode of that perception, in particular in how the recognitional fold of that perception contributes to the determination of that mode. To begin with, the subject's presence is *illusory*, so that the recognitional fold of pictorial perception is perceptual, though nonveridical. In the content of pictorial perception, the subject is ascribed outthreeness, yet clearly enough the subject is not out there.<sup>8</sup> Yet such a false ascription is not doxastic, or merely imaginative; rather, the subject is *seen* as being out there, although it is not such. Yet moreover, if pictorial perception were a mere illusory perception, then the way the picture's subject is present would affect the mode of such a perception. For in a standard illusory perception, its object is given as present not only in the content, but also in the mode of that perception. Yet pictorial perception is different from a mere standard illusory perception of something. For first, in the latter case, there is just one 'kind'-attribution that is *withdrawn* in favour of another such attribution that is provided when the illusion is discovered. Consider what happens when one mistakes a rope for a snake, the paradigmatic case of what some people call a *cognitive* illusion (Fish, 2009). In such a case, once one recovers from the illusion, one's original ascription to something of a certain kind – *being a snake* – is withdrawn in favour of another such attribution to that very something – *being a rope*. Yet in the former case, the illusory ascription of a certain kind to something, i.e., the picture's subject – say, the ascription of *being a snake* to the subject of a snake picture – is preserved, along with the ascription of another kind to another something, i.e., the picture's vehicle – say, the

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<sup>6</sup> To be sure, it may be the case that such a perceptual change is prompted by a *weak* form of cognitive penetration, that is, a form that just affects the *phenomenal character* but not the *content* of a perceptual experience (Macpherson 2012, 2015): knowing that one can see a *Dalmatian* in the picture may indeed prompt a suitable perceptual reorganization of the elements of that picture's vehicle. Cf. Voltolini (2015). But this does not amount to saying that *perceiving* a Dalmatian induces one to perceive the properly grouped organization of the canvas' elements.

<sup>7</sup> More precisely, «out there» here means *in the space that intersects the picture's vehicle* – normally, the space that starts from where the vehicle is. For the reasons why this is the case, cf. Voltolini (2017b).

<sup>8</sup> More precisely, the subject actually has no spatiotemporal location that overlaps with that of the picture's vehicle. See the previous footnote.

ascription of *being a paper canvas*.<sup>9</sup> Second and more importantly for my present purposes, what explains this ‘double kind’ attribution is the fact that, unlike standard illusions, the illusoriness of the subject’s presence is *visually known as such*: the bearer of a pictorial perception not only illusorily sees the subject as being out there, but she also visually knows that it is not there. To be sure, also so-called *optical* illusions (Fish, 2009), i.e., those illusions that are cognitively impenetrable for their percept is impermeable to beliefs, such as e.g. the Müller-Lyer illusion (Fodor, 1983), are illusions that are known as such. Yet, unlike such illusions, the illusoriness of the subject’s presence is known as such for a *visual* reason, not for a modally different reason (say, a tactile experience) or even for testimony. Indeed, in the configurational fold of pictorial perception the picture’s vehicle is instead not only felt, but also *visually known*, as present. This perceptual situation not only prevents the bearer of a pictorial perception from also feeling the picture’s subject as present, but also lets her visually know that it is not present. Indeed, whenever the vehicle is neither felt nor visually known as present, the subject may be both felt and believed to be present, so that the perception of it no longer counts as a pictorial perception, but as a standard illusory perception (Voltolini, 2013, 2015). This typically happens in the case of genuine *trompe-l’oeils* (Voltolini, 2013, 2015), as well as in some particular optical conditions (e.g., when the perceiver only perceives aperture colors and shapes of the subject, Ferretti, 2018).

One may put things this way. When one is deceived by a genuine *trompe-l’oeil*, say a *trompe-l’oeil* of a snake, one has a standard illusory perception of what actually is a pictorial subject, a snake in this case: one mistakes the *trompe-l’oeil* for that subject, by illusorily perceiving it to be out there. Yet when one realizes that one faces a *trompe l’oeil*, one is still under the illusion that one perceives that subject, the snake, as being out there, but that illusory perception is now not only known as such, it is also visually known as such, in what turns out to be the recognitional fold of a pictorial perception. For one now also knowingly perceives, in virtue of what turns out to be the configurational fold of that pictorial perception, that what constitutes the *trompe l’oeil* as the physical object it is, i.e., a certain pictorial vehicle, is out there. My claim is that *this*, admittedly complex, perceptual situation is what affects pictorial perception in general *qua* Wollheimian seeing-in, thereby qualifying the apprehension of the presence of the picture’s subject as a (visually based) knowingly illusory perception of that presence. In a nutshell, in its mode pictorial perception *qua* seeing-in is a visually known illusion of the pictorial subject’s presence, as so grasped in the recognitional fold of such a *sui generis* perception.

### 3. The picture displays its subject

I said before that the picture’s subject is what the picture *displays*. This ascribes to the picture itself, or better to its vehicle, a presentational value as well. In what follows, I will try to show that the relevant perceivable properties of the picture’s vehicle and the relevant perceivable properties ascribed to the picture’s subject stand in the very same relationship as that holding between the sensory features of a standard perceptual experience and the perceivable properties of its object. Since this relationship shows in which sense a standard perceptual experience is properly presentational, it also shows how a picture may display its subject, insofar as its vehicle presents that subject.

As we saw before, a standard perceptual experience is properly presentational in its

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<sup>9</sup> This is one of the reasons why pictorial perception cannot be a ‘onefold’ perceptual experience, as Briscoe (2017) maintains. For a ‘onefold’ perceptual experience is not sufficient for a pictorial perception, since merely entertaining it does not explain why the pictorial perception is also *at the same time* an experience of an object of a *different* kind from the picture’s vehicle, i.e., the picture’s subject, rather than a mere experience of the vehicle itself.



phenomenal character insofar as it is responsive of the fact that its object and its properties are given as present, i.e., as being out there, in such a character. But what does it mean to say that a standard perceptual experience is so responsive?

Different answers can be given to such a question, yet I will here choose one that justifies a *direct realist* approach to perception. Notoriously, unlike *naïve* realism, direct realism claims that *all* standard perceptual experiences, not just genuine perceptions, are properly presentational. Yet unlike *indirect* realism, it also claims that the presentational character of such experiences immediately addresses them to *mind-independent* objects, not to sense-data, whose main metaphysical feature is that of being mind-dependent objects instead. Now, how can the two claims be simultaneously justified?

A possibility that originally traces back to Smith (2002) is the following (Voltolini, 2017a). All standard perceptual experiences are properly presentational insofar as they possess sensory features, basically colours and shapes, which present the corresponding perceivable properties of the objects they are about. In the case of genuine perceptions, whether veridical or not (illusions), this presentation relation is *causally-based*, for the fact that they are caused by the existent objects they are about belongs to their specific mode (Recanati, 2007). Thus, the colours and shapes that feature a genuine perception present the corresponding properties that are instantiated by the existent object it is about. For example, both a veridical perception of a red and round object and an illusory perception that (mis)represents that object as blue and oblong present the properties of *being red* and *being round* that such an object instantiates, insofar as such experiences are both caused by that object, with the perceivable properties it indeed instantiates. Yet in the case of a hallucination, whose specific mode does not refer to causality for its object does not exist, the presentation relation between the features of the experience and the properties that are ascribed to that object is *similarity-based*. For example, a hallucination of a red and round object presents again the properties of *being red* and *being round*. Yet since these properties are not instantiated since that object does not exist, that presentation holds in virtue of the fact that the hallucination itself is reddish and roundish. This way of putting things opens the way to understand how a picture may display its subject. In order for such a display to occur, a presentation relation must hold again between the design properties of the picture's vehicle and the corresponding perceivable properties that are ascribed to the picture's subject. According to Lopes (2005), among the surface properties of a picture's vehicle one must draw a distinction between the *mere surface properties* of that vehicle, typically those responsible for its constitution (*being a piece of paper, being made of plastic* etc.), and its *design properties*, those surface properties of the vehicle that are responsible for the fact that a certain subject is seen in it: typically, its colour and shapes.<sup>10</sup> For example, in containing certain yellowish and roundish spots, Vincent Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* present their subjects, i.e., sunflowers indeed, which are seen in them as being mostly yellow and having a round corolla.<sup>11</sup>

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10 This distinction is more functional than ontological. It is quite likely that e.g. *being cracked*, which seems to be a material surface property of a vehicle, is exploited for letting one see in that vehicle a subject of a certain kind, as it happens with many of Alberto Burri's paintings.

11 Noë (2015) defends a similar idea: pictures are *visual* models that are used to display the subject's visual appearance (in my approach, the vehicle's colors display the subject's ascribed colors, the vehicle's forms display the subject's ascribed forms, etc.). Yet *pace* Noë, it is not in virtue of their being models that pictures display the subject's visual appearance. Their being models accounts for the *representational* value of pictures: their being about certain individuals and their (possibly isomorphically) structurally mirroring the possible relations in which those individuals stand. This may be proved in two ways: i) fortuitous images display their subjects even though they have no representational value; ii) *symbols* may represent individuals and their possible relations without being *depictions*, for they do not display their subjects' visual appearances.

Obviously, there is no causal relation between a picture's subject and a picture's vehicle. As I said before, the picture's subject is a *generic* item, so even in cases in which the picture's referent may have a causal impact on the corresponding vehicle, as with *transparent* pictures (photos, whether static or dynamic, shadows, mirror images etc.: Walton, 1984), no such impact affects the relation between the picture's subject and the picture's vehicle. So, it may seem that the presentation relation between the vehicle's design properties and the perceivable properties with which a subject is seen in it is again similarity-based, as in the case of hallucinations. In point of fact, as to fortuitous images this is precisely the case. When one sees an elephant in a cloud, the fact that the cloud is whitish and elephant-shaped presents the whiteness and the shape of the elephant as this is seen in it.

Yet there are many cases in which there is no similarity between the design properties of the picture's vehicle and the corresponding perceivable properties that the picture's subject is seen as having. Take for example Henry Matisse's *The Green Stripe*. In such a case, as Wollheim himself (2003b) stresses, a normally flesh and blood woman is seen in a painting whose vehicle instantiates a long and narrow green stripe. Now, there is definitely no similarity in colour between the greenish part of the vehicle and the corresponding part of the woman's face. The point may be generalized. As Wittgenstein (1977, III § 117) remarks, in a black and white picture of a boy one sees a normal flesh-coloured human being. So, how can one say that the picture's vehicle displays the picture's subject, if in many cases no such similarity holds? To be sure, one might bite the bullet and say, with Husserl (2006) and Nanay (2016, 2018), that the intermediate item one sees in the picture is, respectively, an alien woman with a green stripe on her face and an alien black and white boy. Indeed, according to them, what possesses the standard colours for a woman and a boy respectively is not the intermediate item, but the picture's referent: Matisse's wife in the first case and the photographed boy in the second case. If this were the case, the similarity between the perceivable properties of the picture's vehicle and those that are seen in the picture's subject would be restored.

Yet firstly, this move seems merely to push the problem one step forward. Husserlians are ready to say that the further relation between the intermediate item and the picture's referent is again a presentation relation: the intermediate item displays or exhibits the picture's referent.<sup>12</sup> Yet in the above cases there is obviously no similarity between the intermediate item, as is postulated to be by Husserlians, and the picture's referent: for example, the greenish woman one allegedly sees in *The Green Stripe* is not similar in colour to Madame Matisse herself. Moreover, as to opaque pictures at least, there is no causal, but just an *intentional*, relation between the intermediate item and the picture's referent: Madame Matisse has obviously not caused the picture's subject of *The Green Stripe* to have the colours and shapes it is seen as having, whatever they are. Thus, how can one ground the claim that the former presents the latter? Secondly, the move itself seems to be hardly justified. Undoubtedly, green is perceptually captured in the apprehension of *The Green Stripe*'s vehicle, notably in the configurational fold of the relevant seeing-in experience. Yet if that vehicle suffered a physical alteration that changed the hue of green that is painted on it, we would still see in it the very same flesh-coloured woman. This is even more evident with respect to black-and-white pictures. If due to a physical process the vehicle of a black-and-white photo turned into a sepia one, we would still see in it the very same flesh-coloured human. One may also put it the other way round. If while watching a football match on TV our device suddenly became unable to transmit colours, we would

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12 Cf. Eldridge (2018), Kurg (2018). This claim is often taken by Husserlians to justify their further claim that the picture's referent is also (quasi-)perceived in the overall pictorial experience. Let me however put this aside.



still see in the match normally flesh-coloured human beings, not exotic black-and-white individuals.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, in order to solve the problem one must look for elsewhere. As we have seen, when it is a matter of fortuitous images, as to presentational issues we rely on the *actual* similarity between the vehicle's design properties and the perceivable properties that are ascribed to the subject. But, one may well say, when it is a matter of *pictures*, as to presentational issues we rely on the artist's *intended* similarity between the vehicle's design properties and the perceivable properties that are ascribed to the subject. To stick again to my favourite example, clearly enough there is no actual similarity between the greenish look of *The Green Stripe's* vehicle and the flesh-coloured face of the woman one sees in it. Yet one may well say that Matisse *intended* that such a greenish look were similar to the colour of that face. As Picasso famously said as to his *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*, "Everybody thinks she is not at all like her portrait. But never mind, in the end she will manage to look just like it."

Finally, if this solution as to the presentational character of pictures is viable, a further advantage arises. As we have seen in the previous section, *qua* seeing-in pictorial perception is just *sui generis* presentational. For in virtue of its recognitional fold it does not take the object of that fold, i.e., the picture's subject, as present in its mode, but just in its content. Yet in its configurational fold it is genuinely presentational as to the object of that fold, i.e., the picture's vehicle. For the sensory features of that fold definitely present, in a causally-based way, the corresponding perceivable properties the picture's vehicle instantiates. One's greenish experience of the green spot lying in *The Green's Stripe's* vehicle presents – in a causally-based way – that vehicle in the perceivable properties it instantiates. Now, since as we have just seen a vehicle presents in its own turn the corresponding picture's subject, one may well say that, albeit in a merely derivative sense, *qua* seeing-in pictorial perception properly presents the picture's subject as well. Thus in the end, there is an admittedly derivative way to bypass the fact seeing-is is just a *sui generis* presentational form of perception.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Incidentally, if we allow for *strong* cognitive penetration about pictures, as Wollheim (2003a) wished – a conceptual penetration affecting not only the phenomenal character, but also the content, of the relevant experience (Macpherson, 2012, 2015) – it is hard not to take the picture's subject as being ascribed the perceptual properties matching the way we conceptualize it.

<sup>14</sup> This paper has been presented at the conferences *Perception and Aesthetic Experience, Starting from Noë's Strange Tools*. San Raffaele Spring School of Philosophy, May 22 – 24 2017, Milan; Anglo-German Picture Theory Group, Annual Meeting 2017, University of Milan, October 2-3 2017, Gargnano sul Garda. I thank the participants for their provoking and stimulating questions.

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